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NBC Network

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SUBJECT Colombian Hit Squad

TOM BROKAW: This country is at war with Colombian drug dealers, and they are fighting back. There have been attacks against the United States and the Colombian government, and talk now of a Colombian hit squad.

Tonight Brian Ross introduces us to the kingpin of the drug trade, the man who may be behind these attacks.

BRIAN ROSS: This is Carlos ^{LEADER}~~Lader~~ (?), the most wanted drug dealer in the world. These rare pictures of Lader were made last week by Colombian TV somewhere in the jungles of Colombia, where Lader is now hiding from Colombian and American authorities.

Operating from this island in the Bahamas, in partnership with the fugitive financier Robert Vesco, Lader became the major supplier of cocaine to American drug dealers, shipping literally hundreds of millions of dollars worth of cocaine from this landing strip. His drug money made him a celebrity in Colombia, where he was elected to public office. But when some of Lader's associates were arrested and turned over to American authorities, Lader went into hiding.

Now, wearing shoulder-length hair, Lader says he has joined up with Colombian leftist guerrillas, who were on guard when Lader granted this interview. Lader says profits from narcotics will be used to finance the guerrillas' fight against American influence in Colombia.

TRANSLATOR: Cocaine and marijuana has become a revolutionary weapon against American imperialism. The Achilles heel of imperialism are the Colombian drugs.

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ROSS: Authorities say Lader and members of his drug network are suspects in the assassination last year of the Justice Minister of Colombia. Lader says he did not have anything to do with it, but that the killing was good for Colombia.

TRANSLATOR: Yes, I justify it, clearly.

ROSS: American authorities now believe that Lader was involved in the recent bombing of the American Embassy in Bogota.

And here in Miami, federal officials say their intelligence reports indicate that it is Lader who is behind reported plans to carry out acts of terrorism in this country against federal drug agents.